

then about 161,000 Americans, young and old and in-between, have represented the best of our country around the world, sharing their expertise in helping the poorest of nations develop, and, just as important, sharing the friendship of the American people. The recruiting slogan of the Peace Corps "The toughest job you'll ever love," is true—although full of rewards, this is not easy work! Over 300 Peace Corps volunteers have even died while in service (mostly in auto crashes).

But I am writing you now about a proposal by Senators Trent Lott and Phil Graham to name the Peace Corps building in Washington after the late Senator Paul Coverdell, who served as Peace Corps director for barely two years in the early '90s. This is a slap in the face of Peace Corps' 161,000 alumni. It is not that Coverdell was that bad Peace Corps director; it's just that he wasn't a distinguished one. And it appears that he wasn't even that interested in the job, using the office to campaign for his Senatorial seat.

There are far more appropriate people to name the building after, like JFK, who founded the Peace Corps, or Sargent Shriver, its first director, or the late Loret Ruppe, a director who was at once both warm and supportive to the volunteers in the field, and shrewdly effective on Capitol Hill. Or it could be named after all 161,000 of us who served, with special attention to the 300 who died while serving.

Naming it after Coverdell would be an extreme insult to us.

Sincerely,

—, *RPCV Lesotho, 1987-90.*

P.S. I just heard that this bill has already passed the Senate. Thus it even more critical that you try to stop it. The bill number is S. 360.RFH.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today opposed to S. 360 because it places the name of one man on the Peace Corps headquarters, and it is very clear that the Peace Corps was never intended to be about one person.

The Peace Corps is about the 7,300 Americans that are currently serving our Nation with pride and distinction in more than 77 countries. The Peace Corps is about the more than 163,000 Americans, including 5,000 Minnesotans, that have served as volunteers in the most remote corners of the planet.

The Peace Corps is about all 15 directors and the thousands of dedicated staff, past and present, that have supported volunteers abroad and returned volunteers at home. And sadly, the Peace Corps is also about the 300 men and women that have died serving their country as volunteers.

□ 1030

Mr. Speaker, today we are asked to place the name of a former Peace Corps director on the agency's headquarters. Yet this administration has still not seen fit to nominate a director to go inside and work in the Peace Corps headquarters to lead the agency forward.

As we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Peace Corps this year, President John F. Kennedy stated that the Peace Corps, "is not designed as an instrument of diplomacy or propaganda or ideology conflict. It is designed to permit our people to exercise more fully

their responsibilities in the great common cause of world development."

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House to respect the thousands of former volunteers and their service to America by not naming the Peace Corps headquarters. Please oppose S. 360, and let us find another way to honor and respect the memory of the late Senator Coverdell.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON).

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) for their support of this legislation and for moving it forward.

Mr. Speaker, I am a friend of Paul Coverdell's family, his wife Nancy, and certainly was a good friend of Mr. Coverdell; and I am proud to stand in support of this. I am saddened and disturbed by those who are in opposition of this legislation. I would ask, Mr. Speaker, is there a road, is there a bridge, is there a building in the United States of America that was built by one person, one personality, one act of one man? I would say certainly there is not. Yet routinely we in this body name roads, bridges and buildings after one person. It is symbolic. It does not say there was no one else involved in it. It only says here was somebody who was typical of the spirit of that group or that organization.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot name every building after everybody. It is too bad because we know all great acts and great institutions have myriads of players. That is what we are doing today, not to slight others, but to commemorate many through naming it for one person.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleagues who are opposed to this to abandon their pettiness and ask them to abandon a little veiled partisanship that seems to be taking place. If this is their standard, it must disturb them greatly when we name the post offices and buildings and roads and bridges which we routinely do under the suspension calendar.

I want to talk a little bit about Paul Coverdell. I first learned about him in 1974. At that time, he was a candidate for the Georgia Senate; and my mother, who was urging me to look into a political career or be interested in politics, she cut out an article from the Atlanta Constitution about a guy running for the Senate. And this guy was doing something unconventional. Rather than just working the good old boys barbecue circuit and going to the back room power brokers, he was a reformer. He was standing by the side of the road and knocking on doors and going direct to the voters, the unknown and the unnamed and untitled voters, to say, "I am Paul Coverdell. I would like to be Georgia's next senator. Here is what I stand for. Do you have any questions?" In 1974, that was an unconventional campaign.

Mr. Speaker, when Paul got to the Georgia Senate, at that time there were only three Republicans in the Georgia Senate. When I joined it in 1984, and I was a member of the General Assembly with the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS), there were nine Republican Senators. Paul Coverdell was the minority leader; and yet, despite the numerical odds against him, he never was without ideas. He played in the arena. He was a force in the arena because of his ideas.

Mr. Speaker, I remember one idea he had on DUI legislation. His approach, rather than just keep increasing the DUI penalties, he said a lot of these repeat offenders are alcoholics. Why not require an assessment and then rehabilitation. That was a new idea, but that was typical of Paul Coverdell.

Mr. Speaker, when he came to the United States Senate and when he served in the Peace Corps, he was also a man of ideas. As a Peace Corps director, he had a world vision. So many directors prior to him used this as a political plum for backing the right candidate for President, but not Paul Coverdell.

Mr. Speaker, he went into the most difficult and remote places and countries and said, "How can we help with health care? Are there better farming techniques out there? Is there a way to get cleaner water? What can we do for the children?"

I remember during that period of time when he was director of the Peace Corps, we had a meeting at our house. We had all kinds of Peace Corps volunteers there. It is interesting to hear some of the comments today. I do not remember any of those volunteers being resentful of Paul Coverdell's leadership. They loved the fact that he would ask former volunteers what they thought.

Mr. Speaker, we were in the middle of our meeting and Mr. Coverdell was giving a world view wrap-up, and my little girl who was 4 years old came running into the room. She had been playing out in the backyard with the other kids, and she said, "Mom and Dad, I fell off the slide, and I hurt my heinie, and all the other children are laughing at me." The room full of grown-ups fell silent; and all eyes went to the little girl who was at the foot of this soon-to-be U.S. Senator, a very dignified and somewhat sophisticated man and a tad old-fashioned in his mannerisms, to a very positive extent, I might add, and he looked down at her and smiled. It said it all. Everything was fine, and the little girl got herself back together and ran back out on the playground with the rest of the kids.

Mr. Speaker, that was the grace and charm of Paul Coverdell. Here is a man with a world view but could look at a 4-year-old girl and say, everything is okay. That is what made Paul Coverdell special.

Mr. Speaker, when he came to Washington both with the Peace Corps and